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Contact: T.J. Bucholz
(517) 241-4395

Department of Education Debuts MI-CLiMB, Effort Clarifies Michigan Curriculum Framework

A new electronic effort to clarify Michigan's curricular framework language took a critical step forward today, as the Department of Education made a CD-ROM available to Michigan's 86,000 classroom teachers.

Work on the Michigan Clarification of Language in Michigan's Benchmarks (MI-CLiMB) project started two years ago, with a cadre of master teachers beginning the arduous task of clarifying the 1,200 benchmarks of the Michigan Curriculum Framework.

Through the use of the Internet, an additional 1,400 teachers and subject specialists wrote and reviewed benchmark clarifications for MI CLiMB over the course of the last seven months. The CD-ROM is a compilation of their collective work.

Distribution of the CD ROMs will be made through the 57 ISDs and RESAs in Michigan. Additional partners are the public school districts in Detroit, Flint, Kalamazoo, Port Huron, Saginaw Township, Southfield and Wayne-Westland, as well as the Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools, the Michigan Mathematics and Science Centers Network, and the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators, said Bill Bushaw, Chief Academic Officer for the Michigan Department of Education.

"These standards and benchmarks have been the basis of instruction and assessment in Michigan since the State Board of Education approved them in 1995," Bushaw said. "Michigan's standards and benchmarks are critical instructional tools that educators use on a daily basis throughout Michigan."

The benchmarks also utilize the specialized language of each academic discipline.

"We have learned that the benchmarks are useless if they are not clearly communicated or understood," Bushaw said. "MI-CLiMB creates a single understanding of each benchmark's meaning and will focus teaching and learning in Michigan classrooms, especially in those schools that are underachieving, as per the State Board of Education's overall goal."

MI-CLiMB supports the goal of helping teachers teach and children learn by providing a technologically advanced way for teachers to gain a clearer understanding of the language of the benchmarks, and will provide electronic search capabilities to create connections between benchmarks across and within subjects.

The MI-CLiMB project also clarifies the meaning of the Michigan Curriculum Framework by providing educators with an instructional example, an assessment example, and resources for each benchmark.

"MI-CLiMB will assist teachers with creating lessons that use groups of benchmarks within subjects and integrate benchmarks across the curriculum to provide the best instruction possible, said Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Watkins. "Michigan teachers are using technology as a powerful ally in improving instruction for our students - Michigan's most important resource."